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high water

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT SECTION 449-2864

Volume 1.

April 12, 1982



HIGH WATER

"High Water" brings the floodplain administrators of Montana news of what's going on in the state's floodplain management program. This program is administered by the Floodplain Management Section of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Since 1971, when our legislature passed the Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management Act, we have been working to delineate the 100-year floodplains of the water courses in the state. DNRC also coordinates the National Flood Insurance Program in Montana. A major goal of the program is to keep floodplains from being used in ways that may cause hazards to life and property if flooding occurs.

This is where the floodplain administrators can help their communities through the enforcement of local floodplain management ordinances. Working with the state Floodplain Management staff, the local floodplain administrator can assist in the development of community plans to address the problems caused by flooding, and to prevent some of them.

High water can be both expensive and dangerous. It can threaten human life, drown livestock, and destroy homes and other structures. Last year's floods washed out bridges and roads, took down power and telephone lines, and forced people to leave their homes. Emergency crews worked long and hard to save lives and property.

Some of this hardship can be avoided. Structures on floodplains catch the flood waters and may actually make them more destructive. If people realize the danger of building on these susceptible areas, they can avoid them. They will benefit, and so will their downstream neighbors.

DON'T LET SPRING FLOODING SURPRISE YOUR COMMUNITY

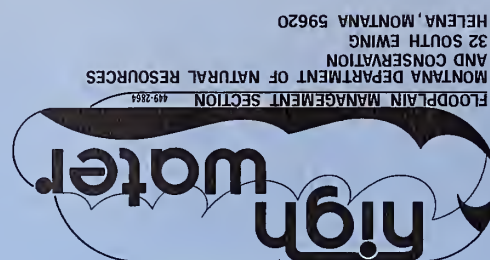
The warm spell we had in the middle of February melted snowpack and put a lot of runoff water into our creeks and rivers. There may be more coming in May and June. As a floodplain administrator, you are working in a community where flooding could occur. You can prepare. You may need to help the local residents work out warning systems, coordinate emergency workers, and plan for the possibility of evacuation.

If your County Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) coordinator doesn't have an emergency plan, call Jan Henry or Jim Anderson at the state office of DES at 449-3034. Or call the Floodplain Management Section of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at 449-2864.

OUR STAFF WILL BE GLAD TO HELP YOU

CALL US. The voice you hear may belong to:
Cindy Forgey, Clerical/Technician--she handles correspondence and other support work for the team.
Tim Pool, State Coordinator for the National Flood Insurance Program, and liaison between state, federal, and local activities. He also assists you, the floodplain administrator, by offering technical help, information, and training.
John Hamill, Section Supervisor--he has the technical knowledge and experience in hydrology and hydraulics needed to assist you in interpreting profiles, flows, and elevations for the flood insurance studies.

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NEW LITERATURE

To help you in your job as a floodplain administrator, we are putting together an Administrative Guidebook. We are also preparing a bibliography of publications on floodplains and their management. Both these aids will be available soon, and will be distributed to you.

We have on hand both federal and state brochures that deal with flooding, floodplain management, reading maps, and other information you will find useful. Let us know if you need this kind of help.

SEMINAR IN BILLINGS

The first of a series of training seminars was conducted in Billings on February 9, among the thirty people attending were planners, floodplain administrators, and representatives from Senator Max Baucus' Billings office. Slides and handouts were used to cover a variety of subjects and answer some of the questions asked.

Bob Kistner, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region 8, Denver office, presented information on insurance and regulations of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Rodger Foster, consulting engineer with Morrison-Maierle, Inc., explained how a flood insurance study is conducted. Jim Kraft, Yellowstone County Floodplain Administrator, who hosted the seminar, demonstrated how the floodplain development permit system works. Exercises were then conducted to help the floodplain managers become familiar with the Floodway and Flood Insurance Rate maps.

John Hamill explained Montana regulations and pointed out the differences from the NFIP regulations. Tim Pool gave a slide show of some of the areas flooded last year, showing the advantages of floodplain management.

Three or four more day-long seminars will be held in other regions of the state to help all those working in floodplain management. You will be notified of places and dates of these seminars. If you can't attend, Tim can come to your community to help you.

On March 24-26, Tim attended a workshop in Denver on the legal issues of flooding, urban drainage, and wetlands. We will pass this information on to you as soon as we can.

YOU CAN HELP US

You can help us get this newsletter to the right people. If you aren't the floodplain administrator or involved in the Montana floodplain management program, please let us know.

Also, although most of those on our mailing list live and work in communities that are already taking part in the program, you may know an official in another community that would be interested. Communities that aren't participating in the program can get information about it from the Floodplain Management Section, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, 32 S. Ewing, Helena, MT 59620; telephone 449-2864.

WE CAN HELP YOU

If you need help in administering your community's floodplain management program, call on us. We may be able to pass on solutions that have worked for other communities, or find a way to help you.

RECORDS ARE IMPORTANT

We ask you, as part of your administrative duties, to maintain records of your transactions with the people to whom you offer advice, or give technical assistance. It's important that you have a complete record of the progress of projects you work on, too.

One of the staff from the Floodplain Management Section will meet with you to see how things are going in your community. We call these meetings Technical Assistance meetings.

These meetings serve to maintain personal contact and keep us all up to date. They also let us see if we are doing our job correctly, you are doing yours, and if further assistance or study is needed.

Remember that copies of all permits that you issue are to be sent to the Floodplain Management Section of DNRC.

